

# MONTANA UPDATE

Montana Department of Commerce

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## Tourism Award Winners

Four statewide tourism award winners were honored for their achievements by the Montana Tourism and Recreation Industry at the 2007 Montana Governor's Conference on Tourism and Recreation in Helena. The honorees included:

**Mike Scholz**—Tourism Person of the Year (shown)

**Roundup**—Tourism Community of the Year

**75th Anniversary of the Montana State Fair**—Tourism Event of the Year

**Montana Dinosaur Trail**—Tourism Partnership of the Year

Mike Scholz of Big Sky has been a stalwart supporter and contributor to Montana's tourism industry for all of his professional life. Most recently he has been the driving force behind SB 284—"The Best Place First" legislation. It has been his ability to bring varying interests to the table to see the collective good that has kept the process moving forward. In addition to being the former owner and manager of Buck's T-4 Lodge in Big Sky for the past 35 years, he is the current chair of the Tourism Advisory Council.

Roundup was honored for working collectively to develop a sustainable tourism event for their area, the Roundup Independence Days Extravaganza (RIDE). RIDE offers a variety of entertainment over a three day period, thus encouraging visitors to spend one or more nights in Roundup. This event provides the economic stimulus and tourism exposure the community desired. In addition, the success of the event has led to a revitalization of community pride, leading to several long-term tourism goals for the area.



Celebrating a major milestone this past year, the Montana State Fair has maintained the traditions of the fair that have perpetuated its 75 year history, but at the same time it hasn't failed to evolve with the times as well, providing attractions, entertainment, activities and competitions that rival many in its same class. Additionally, the State Fair provides a strong economic stimulus to the greater Great Falls area as well as other regions of the state.

The Montana Dinosaur Trail was honored for their unique collaboration of 15 facilities in 12 central and eastern communities including four tourism regions, two chambers of commerce and four government agencies. This partnership has not only provided an educational and user-friendly opportunity to highlight Montana's prehistoric treasures but it has also meant a welcome boost to some of Montana's most economically struggling regions.

Congratulations and thank you to all of this year's award winners.

## 2008 Governor's Conference Set; 2007 Presentations Available

The 2007 "Trek to Success" Montana Governor's Conference on Tourism & Recreation is in the history books. Thanks to all the 450-plus Montanans, 20 sponsors, 50 exhibitors and our out-of-state friends who attended. Many of the 2007 presentations are posted on the Conference Presentation Page of the conference website: [www.travelmontana.mt.gov/conference](http://www.travelmontana.mt.gov/conference).

For 2008, we are inviting you to come to West Yellowstone and help celebrate that

community's Centennial Anniversary. The 2008 Conference will happen April 17-18, the Thursday and Friday before Yellowstone National Park plans to open for the spring and summer season. Our host facility is the Holiday Inn SunSpree Resort.

If you did not receive any conference registration materials or notices in 2007, but would like to be on our contact list, email Travel Montana's Victor Bjornberg with your contact information, [vbjornberg@mt.gov](mailto:vbjornberg@mt.gov). Those attending the 2007 conference were emailed or mailed evaluation surveys. Please make sure you have filled those out and returned them to us. Your feedback and speaker or presentation topic suggestions will be used in putting together the 2008 agenda.



## 2006 Visitor Results In

The Institute for Tourism and Recreation Research (ITRR) released its findings for the 2006 profiles for non-resident travel in Montana. ITRR reported that Montana hosted 10.38 million visitors in 2006, an increase of 2.5% from the 10.13 million visitors in 2005. Those visitors spent over \$2.91 billion in 2006, with an average expenditure of \$148.59 per group, per day. This is an increase of 5.8% over 2005 total expenditure figures. Betsy Baumgart, Travel Montana Administrator states that, "We are excited to continue to see expenditures grow. With increased visitor spending, comes increased tax revenue. Without the tax revenue tourism brings to the state, each Montanan would have to pay an additional \$255."

According to ITRR, in 2006, nonresident visitors directly supported 36,500 jobs, for an annual payroll of \$747 million. For

more information on the economic and visitation estimates for 2006, log on to [www.itrr.umt.edu/economicest.htm](http://www.itrr.umt.edu/economicest.htm).

## Communities Busy With CTAP Grant Projects

The 2005-2006 "graduates" of the Community Tourism Assessment Program (CTAP) are busy working on their priority tourism projects identified through the 10-month "self help" process. Each was awarded a \$10,000 grant from Travel Montana following completion of the CTAP process and they have gathered local funds for their projects. Here are the communities and what they are doing:

The Absarokee CTAP Action Committee is hosting a May 10-11 Festival and Event Management Workshop. The workshop's 38 spaces are filled with participants from across Yellowstone Country. University of Minnesota Tourism Center Extension Professor Kent Gustafson is the workshop's featured presenter/facilitator. The Absarokee community will also be investing a portion of its grant into equipment for hosting current and new events offered as community tourism and economic development tools.

The Butte CTAP Action Committee is going "green" with a landscaping project near the Berkeley Pit Visitor Center. Building off the success of the Old Lexington Gardens project, plans are to incorporate a Celtic Knot Flower Garden design with historic interpretation on what is now a brown landscape near the visitor center.

The Cooke City-Silver Gate-Colter Pass CTAP Action Committee will invest their grant funds into the \$920,000 Shoofly Historical Center/Community Center. The historical/community center will provide interpretation of the area's natural, historical and cultural resources, provide visitor information, group meeting space, public restrooms and office space for local, county and federal agencies and organizations. The new center is expected to open by summer 2009.

## Montana Dinosaur Trail "Prehistoric Passports"

If you needed an incentive to visit the Montana Dinosaur Trail, here it is: the Montana Dinosaur Trail "Prehistoric Passport." The 15 trail facilities have joined together to create a four-color, 22-page

passport-size booklet you can have stamped at each facility to make you eligible for prizes. The passport describes the extraordinary dinosaur displays, exhibits and activities found at each of the trail's 15 facilities in 12 Montana communities. It includes Fun Fossil Facts, space for field notes and space for the stamp—unique in color and image to each facility—to verify the passport owner's visit. Once the passport has stamps from all the facilities, its owner receives a gold seal and certificate of completion and an official Montana Dinosaur Trail Prehistoric Passport T-Shirt specifically designed for those who complete the trail.

The Prehistoric Passport is available for \$5 at each trail facility. Passport owners have five years from the purchase date to complete the trail and be eligible for the rewards. Proceeds from passport sales are used by the non-profit trail organization's members to support their facilities and the promotion of the Montana Dinosaur Trail.

The Montana Dinosaur Trail was created in 2005 to highlight the unique and, in many cases, world class dinosaur displays, interpretation and programs found in Montana. The trail website which includes facility and contact information is at [www.mtdinotrail.org](http://www.mtdinotrail.org).

## MFO Brings Home the Prize

The Montana Film Office (MFO) was recently in Los Angeles marketing Montana to the film industry at the Locations Trade Show, April 12-14 at the Santa Monica Civic Center. The show attracted over 3000 industry-only attendees and the MFO brought back 150 leads. The event is hosted by the Association of Film Commissioners International (AFCI), the worldwide professional

organization of film offices. In addition to the trade show, national and international film commissions were honored with the AFCI's annual marketing awards. The MFO won the top award for color advertising for their "Leave Your Passport, Bring Your Vision" campaign, which was designed by their ad agency,



Wendt Advertising. The judges, whom consisted of film industry professionals, selected Montana's winning entry over submissions from film commissions from around the world.

In upcoming events, the 30th Annual International Wildlife Film Festival will kick off in Missoula on May 12th and run through the 19th. The MFO will host the Montana Welcome Reception for wildlife filmmakers on Monday May 14th. The festival is one of the longest running and well-respected festivals in the Wildlife Filmmaking world and a wonderful event for Missoula.

## "Service You Can Bank On"

Customer Service Seminar Season Is Here, Schedule Yours Now!

The new "Service You Can Bank On" Customer Service Seminars are ready for scheduling in your community, business or organization. So far in 2007, 22 sessions have been scheduled in 14 Montana communities. To schedule a seminar contact Jodi Smith or Ben Traina with Montana Superhost at 406-756-3374, FAX: 406-756-3351, [superhost@fvcc.edu](mailto:superhost@fvcc.edu). A scheduling form is available on Travel Montana's Intranet site at: [www.travelmontana.mt.gov/OURPROGRAMS/Superhost.asp](http://www.travelmontana.mt.gov/OURPROGRAMS/Superhost.asp).

"Service You Can Bank On" presents a three hour fast-paced, interactive customer service seminar filled with tangible tools for improving attitude, teamwork, problem solving, sales, marketing and service delivery. You and your staff will leave the seminar energized and fully committed to your personal role in delivering quality customer service you can take to the bank!

**MONTANA**

Alternative accessible formats of this document will be provided to disabled persons on request.

## Calendar of Events:

### May

- 12-20 National Tourism Week
- 16-27 Cannes Film Festival, France
- 22-26 Scandinavian Fam Tour

### June

- 4-6 Tourism Advisory Council Meeting, Red Lion Hotel, Kalispell
- 7-9 Travel Alliance Partners Conference, Palm Springs, CA
- 16-21 RMI Benelux Mission

For all of the latest Montana tourism industry information log on to: [travelmontana.mt.gov](http://travelmontana.mt.gov)